



Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

— *Making a positive difference through education and service* —

August 20, 2008

Dear School Administrator,

In 2008-2009, Missouri students will begin taking end-of-course assessments in Algebra I, English II, and Biology. These assessments, which replace MAP testing for high school students, will fulfill Missouri's high school testing requirements as outlined in federal No Child Left Behind Legislation. Just as we have determined achievement levels for MAP assessments in recent years, we will need to define student performance on end-of-course assessments as Below Basic, Basic, Proficient or Advanced.

To accomplish this important task, we will conduct an Achievement Level Setting Conference with the assistance of our contractors for end-of-course assessment development, Riverside Publishing and Questar Assessment. This conference will provide an opportunity for panels of educators and other individuals to discuss course-level expectations for each applicable course and to review assessment items to determine the appropriate "cut scores" for each achievement level. The composition of the achievement level setting panels and the expertise of panelists are critically important to this process. The panel for each end-of-course assessment will consist of 15-18 members. Within each panel, a minimum of 50 percent of the panelists will be classroom teachers. At least half of the remaining panelists will be non-teacher educators (administrators, curriculum specialists, etc.) with knowledge of the appropriate content area. Each panel will also include non-school employees (parents, business professionals, etc.) with expertise in the appropriate content area. Because you have the opportunity to work with excellent educators, as well as members of your community, we are asking for your input in assembling achievement level setting panels that are knowledgeable and reflective of Missouri's diverse population.

Forms for you to nominate classroom teachers, non-teacher educators and non-school employees to serve on end-of-course achievement level setting panels, along with guidelines for panelist nomination, are posted on the DESE website at <http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/assess/>. These nominations will be placed into a large pool from which we will select final panelists. Selected panelists will be representative of the state's demographic characteristics and geographic make-up. **The End-of-Course Achievement Level Setting Conference will be held on November 3-5, 2008. Specific location for the conference has not yet been determined, but it will be held in mid-Missouri.**

If you are interested in nominating an individual(s) to serve as a panelist, please complete the appropriate form(s) according to the specified guidelines and return it to the Assessment Section by mail or fax. **Nomination forms must be postmarked or faxed on or before September 15, 2008, to be considered for panel selection. Return address and fax number are printed on the forms.**

Prior to submitting nominations, please contact any individual you wish to nominate to ensure his/her interest and availability if selected to participate as a panelist. It is very important that panelists are

available for all three days of the conference. All participants will be reimbursed for travel expenses and meals not provided during the conference. Additionally, those panelists that are not otherwise being compensated (by their employer, school district, etc.) will receive a stipend of \$150 for each full day of work. School districts will be reimbursed for the cost of substitutes for participating classroom teachers. We will notify all panelists of the status of their nomination in early October. Those nominees selected to participate in the Achievement Level Setting Conference will receive further information about the conference at that time. Thank you for your assistance in this important endeavor. Please feel free to contact the Assessment Section at 573-751-3545 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stan Johnson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Stan Johnson, Assistant Commissioner
Division of School Improvement